From: Leonard G. Learner
To: City Council
Subject: Resolution to Boycott HP
Date: Thursday, April 19, 2018 3:42:53 PM

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As a former longtime resident of Cambridge, I write to express my deep concern over what I understand to be a pending resolution calling for a boycott Hewlett Packard because of certain contracts between HP and the Israeli government. There is neither time nor space to address how this resolution is premised upon a gross and fundamental distortion and misrepresentation of the complicated and nuanced realities of Middle East politics.

Instead, I will address four questions that pertain to directly to Cambridge itself and to the workings of the Council as follows:

1. Assuming it is appropriate for the Council to address international issues at all, why is the Council focused on the affairs of only one country in the world—the State of Israel? With massive slaughter occurring in Syria and Yemen, with fascism on the rise in Europe and Turkey, with Iran aggressively pursuing hegemony throughout the Middle East and with political repression and slave-labor conditions existing in Cambridge's own "sister city" in Dongguan, China, why would the Council concern itself only with a democratic ally of the United States, trapped in an excruciatingly difficult security situation? The answer, it seems to me, is that this resolution is foisted upon the Council by forces supporting BDS—boycott, divestment and sanctions—a radical, anti-Israel, anti-coexistence group of ideologues who have been denounced by true progressives including Barack Obama, Bernie Sanders, Keith Ellison, Elizabeth Warren, Deval Patrick, Joe Kennedy and many others.

2. While the resolution's proponents have been working on the resolution with certain members of the Council for many weeks or months, why have the contents of the resolution been kept secret from the general public until the very last moment allowed under the open meeting rules? Clearly, the resolution's proponents fear the backlash of opposition that will result if there were sufficient time for the public to consider the pernicious goals of the resolution and the ideological motives of those who support it.

3. Why would the Council disrupt the civic life of the City of Cambridge by adopting such a divisive and hateful resolution? Jewish residents of Cambridge have been at the forefront of the progressive atmosphere that is so characteristic of the City. Jewish voters have supported progressive Democratic presidential candidates by margins of sixty and seventy percent. Why would Cambridge offend its Jewish citizens by adopting a resolution aimed directly, maliciously and exclusively at the Jewish State?

4. Finally, why would the Council adopt a resolution that threatens the economic well-being of the City of Cambridge? The economic drivers of the City include, among others, Harvard, MIT and Kendall Square. All of these places pursue their work in close collaboration with Israeli academics, scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs. Why would the Council adopt a resolution that would cause these people—and others like them in the future—to question whether they wish to establish roots in a city that is so inappropriately hostile to their homeland?

I respectfully ask you to consider carefully this resolution's impact on the City's true interests and to consider also the true motives of the anti-Israel ideologues that are behind it. For the sake of the City's unity, its civic life and its economic well-being, I urge you to vote against this resolution.

Thank you for your consideration of these views.

Sincerely yours,

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